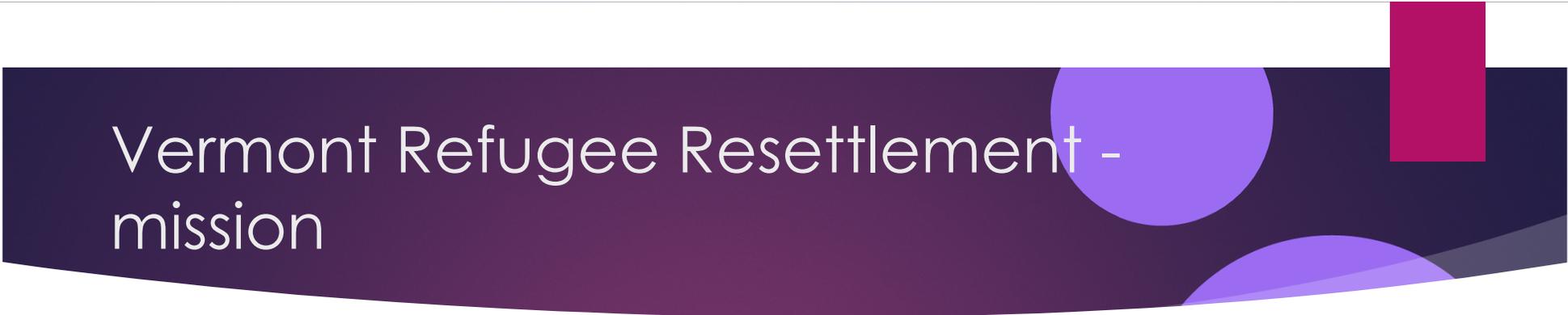


Refugee Resettlement in Vermont

Senate Appropriations, January 17, 2023

Tracy Dolan, Director, State Refugee Office



The header features a dark purple background with a wavy bottom edge. On the right side, there are several overlapping shapes: a large light purple circle, a smaller light purple circle below it, and a vertical pink rectangle to the right of the top circle.

Vermont Refugee Resettlement - mission

The mission of refugee resettlement in Vermont is to promote and provide a safe and welcoming home for refugees and immigrants, and to promote their full participation as self-sufficient individuals and families in the economic, social, and civic life of Vermont.

Vermont refugee resettlement

- ▶ Number of refugees assigned to a state is determined by State Department (Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migration) with input from resettlement agencies and consultation with state government
- ▶ Vermont has two resettlement agencies – USCRI (formerly VRRP) and ECDC.
- ▶ 4 official sites in FFY 2023, Colchester, Rutland, Brattleboro and Bennington
- ▶ 2021-2022 – Unique year for refugee resettlement
 - ▶ Re-establishing refugee program (also, large influx Haitian/Cuban Entrants)
 - ▶ Afghan Humanitarian Parolees
 - ▶ Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees (sponsorship program)

Refugees resettled in Vermont

Refugee Resettlement in Vermont								
Federal Fiscal Year	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Number of Refugees	15	91	47	23	114	133	235	386
Number of AHPs	0	246	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of UHPs (estimate)*	30	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	45	387	47	23	114	133	235	386

Refugee projections FFY2023

- ▶ ECDC and USCRI have been approved collectively to receive approximately 425 refugees in this year.
- ▶ Arrivals depend in part on overseas refugee program efficiency.
- ▶ Main focus of resettlement activity is employment-related services (job placement, ELL) ultimately leading to economic self sufficiency.

Ukrainians in Vermont

- ▶ New program for sponsoring Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion to enter the US
- ▶ **Uniting for Ukraine** provides a pathway for Ukrainian citizens and their immediate family members who are outside the United States to come to the United States and stay temporarily in a two-year period of parole. Ukrainians participating in Uniting for Ukraine must have a supporter in the United States who agrees to provide them with financial support for the duration of their stay in the United States.
- ▶ In Vermont, we have 135 people applications for sponsorship across the state through the sponsorship program. Unsure about how many have arrived – 57 Ukrainians have enrolled in Medicaid, likely more are here.
- ▶ Eligible for most refugee services and related federal and state benefits



Core Services for Refugees

Overall Goal – Economic Self-sufficiency

Intensive resettlement services are focused on first 90 days with case management/employment related services available for up to 5 years. The resettlement agency assists with the following:

- ❑ Airport pick-up and welcome meal
- ❑ Assistance with securing housing
- ❑ Employment assistance
- ❑ School registration
- ❑ English Language Learning classes
- ❑ Providing one time payment for basic needs
- ❑ Appointment for Domestic Health Assessment and locating primary care provider
- ❑ Enrolling in benefit programs (Medicaid, Reach up, Refugee Cash Assistance, SNAP, WIC)

Refugee Resettlement Funding

- ▶ Work is primarily funded through State Department and through Department of Health and Human Services
 - ▶ Direct federal funding to resettlement agencies (per capita and some grants)
 - ▶ Federal funding to the State Refugee Office – Base funding, Afghan specific, Ukrainian specific, set asides.
 - ▶ Base funding is based on 'look back' data. Challenge this year is that our 'refugee' (not Afghan) numbers were low for last two years which impacts the amount we get this year for new refugees who are not Afghans. Could be significant deficit. Federal gov't just announced a supplement, not sure how much we will get or when it will arrive
 - ▶ State funding this current state fiscal year (\$500,000) for 'aid to refugees' – was invested in workforce (apprenticeships, ELL in the workplace) and housing related subsidies

FFY 23 federal funding (current)

\$ 97,876	Support Services (G99RSF2)
\$ 75,000	Services for Elderly Refugees (G99RSF2)
\$ 95,000	School Impact (G99RSF2)
\$ 65,000	Youth Mentoring (G99RSF2)
\$ 250,000	Health Promotion (G99RSF2)
\$ 603,767	Afghan Support Services (G992218)
	Afghan School Impact (G992210)
	Afghan School Impact (support) (G992218)
	Afghan Youth Mentoring (G992210)
\$ 117,509	Afghan Health Promotion (G992210)
	Afghan Legal Services (G992218)
\$ 63,627	Ukrainian Support Services
\$ 20,300	Ukrainian School Impact
\$ 50,000	Ukrainian Health Promotion

Employment services – the need

- ❑ If we receive the projected number of refugees, there will be a need for more staff to provide direct employment services. E.g. AALV worked with 168 refugees this past year but this year my office is unable to provide them funding for the employment services work that they normally provide due to lack of funding for refugees who are not Afghan or Ukrainian (they will receive funding for Youth Mentoring, Afghan Legal Services and Services to Elderly Refugees).
- ❑ Longer term strategies including building relationships with employers, engaging and educating the business community, and creating tools to build employer confidence would assist in helping Vermont's businesses absorb this important new workforce and community.